

REVELATION 2:8-11

Smyrna

Introduction: Joel Finck: "These seven churches don't represent the present age of grace. But they refer to a future time during the Tribulation. These are churches-synagogues that are part of the Prophecy Kingdom Program. They do correspond to seven eras of Israel's history. It is almost as though God takes Israel back through her entire history in a fast forward mode to repeat the seven eras of history."

Example: The first letter to the church at Ephesus corresponds to Israel coming out of Egypt and being married to Jehovah. They left their first love. Now the second church, Smyrna, corresponds to the 40 years in the wilderness - a period of testing of life and death.

Smyrna is **50** miles north of Ephesus on the Aegean Sea, having a harbor. Many have said it was a beautiful city with a "golden street" that connected to the temple of Zeus. Smyrna had great commerce, science, and medicine. Today, it is called Izmir and is located in Turkey.

Smyrna:

A. Revelation 2:8 - And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

1. "Smyrna" means bitter myrrh. It at times was used to embalm the dead, as it had a fragrant perfume (Joseph and Nicodemus). So Smyrna is closely related to death.
2. Christ is the one writing to Smyrna. He is the resurrected-glorified-eternal-Christ-Messiah (Deity). He has immortality within Himself and that is why He can give eternal life to those who believe (1:17-18).

*The reason this is important to the time of Smyrna is that they will be dealing with martyrdom and death. It is wonderful to know their Messiah has resurrection power to raise them to life again.

B. His Commendation:

Revelation 2:9 - I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.

1. God sees all they do in their service for Him: the difficulties, persecution, troubles for His name's sake and the financial toll it has taken on them (no way to make a living).
 - a. *This will be the result: Revelation 13:15-17 - [And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. Rev. 13:16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: Rev. 13:17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.]
 - b. They can't sell or buy. Even if they have money, the Beast's laws will have them on the run. Remember what Jesus said: Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Matt. 24:16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.

Matthew 25:34-6, 38-40 - Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: Matt. 25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Matt. 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Matt. 25:38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? Matt. 25:39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? Matt. 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

2. [but thou art rich] Things are **not** always as they seem to appear! They will be under persecution, rejection, ostracized, loss of jobs, awful affliction, and impoverished. They, from other's view, will **look** to be in terrible circumstances. But because they had remained faithful while under distressful times, God says, "to **Me**...you are rich!"

****The Smyrna Jewish believers will be faithful in their trials.**

3. [and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.]
 - a. These will be like the Jewish **elders** in Israel. They are by birth Israelites, but that is not enough to make one a **true** Jew (John 8:33, 37, 39, 44, 45, 47). A true Jew has to believe Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ-Messiah.
 - b. As in Jesus' time, so here, unbelieving religious Jews will persecute the Little Flock again by doing the bidding of their true father, the **devil**. [synagogue of Satan] will have Satan **incarnate in Antichrist** counterfeiting as God (temple-ichabod).

II Thessalonians 2:4 - Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.
 - c. As there was a Judas in Christ's Little Flock, no doubt in the Tribulation there will be Judases who say they are Jews and are not, for the purpose of betraying true Jewish believers for **personal** gain and even to see them put to **death**.
4. Question? Have you noticed there is **no** Gentile language? It is all Jewish. Those not Jews doesn't mean they are not Jews. They were Jews by **blood**, but not Jews by **faith**.
 - a. Note: Doesn't this take place **today** within Christendom?

II Corinthians 11:13-15 - For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 2Cor. 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 2Cor. 11:15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

- b. Remember:

Isaiah 8:20 - To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.

I Timothy 4:1 - Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

I Thessalonians 2:3 - Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

- C. Revelation 2:10 - Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

1. Christ says: "When you stand against these people within your synagogue and say they are **false**.. not true believers...not whom they claim to be...do it **boldly**. They are a bunch of apostate traitors who speak lies and follow Satan (wheat-tares). (II Timothy 4:2)
2. Don't **fear** what they will do to you and know that the devil is **behind** persecuting true believers. Christ stated this in:

Matthew 10:18-22 - And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. Matt. 10:19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. Matt. 10:20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. Matt. 10:21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death. Matt. 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake [but he that endureth to the end shall be saved].

Matthew 24:9-11 - Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. Matt. 24:10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. Matt. 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

Revelation 12:11-14 - And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Rev. 12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. Rev. 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. Rev. 12:14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

3. Verse 10b [and ye shall have tribulation ten days:]
 - a. Commentaries go crazy about these 10 days, but we will simply take it **literally**. God here means what He says. It could mean: "You true believing Jews (and proselytes), the devil's ministers are going to take you to prison. You will have **10** days to decide whether you are going to take the **mark** of the beast or not. And, if you don't, they are going to come and take you to be **executed**."

****Daniel**

- b. Notice how many of them die:

Revelation 6:9-11 - And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: Rev. 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? Rev. 6:11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Revelation 20:4 - And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

- c. They will die in faith, with their spirits-souls going to **heaven**. At the end of the Tribulation, their spirit-soul will be **reunited** with their resurrected body to go into the kingdom.

Revelation 20:6 - Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

- d. Beheading someone will be a form of **public** execution. They are taken out to the public square (TV, media) and have their heads chopped off by a sword. Doing this in public will demonstrate how **cruel** and serious Antichrist will be. As a result of this, **most** will take the mark of the Beast, so they can continue living physically!
- e. ****But God gives His warning too:**

Revelation 14:9-11 - And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, Rev. 14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: Rev. 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

*They will have to really believe in **resurrection**. That is why Christ first identified Himself as One Who was dead, and **is** alive.

4. Verse 10c - [be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.]

- a. Hebrews 10:23 - Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;)

*God promises them that if they will **hold** fast, no matter what happens, they will have eternal life in the kingdom. This means even though they die in the Tribulation, they will be resurrected to body life again.

God promises, thus putting His **Word on trial.

- b. There is even more! Because of their standing for Christ and what that **cost** them, [I will give thee a crown of life]. They will have a **special identity in the kingdom**, showing that even in persecution to death they loved Messiah-Christ to the end.

James 1:12 - Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

- D. Revelation 2:11 - He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

1. These faithful believers will be part of the **first** resurrection unto eternal life. They do not have to worry about the second death that ends in the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:8 - But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

2. Jesus had said to His followers: Matthew 24:13 - [But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.]

****Remember, under Israel's program, the spiritual and physical go together. That is why it says: [... He that overcometh]. In this context, it means they will not take the mark of the beast. God **com**forts them by telling them they do not have to worry about the second death. Meaning, it is more than physical deliverance. It is also rescue from **eternal** suffering in the lake of fire!**

3. Also, when God resumes dealing with Israel, they are back under the **law**.

Matthew 24:15-16, 20 - When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Matt. 24:16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Matt. 24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

Questions:

1. What end-time player **nation** will Smyrna be in?
2. Why did Christ present Himself the **way** He did to Smyrna?
3. Why won't the believers' money do them **much** good?
4. Who are **those** of the Synagogue of Satan?
5. How do we know there is no Gentile Body Church addressed **here**?
6. When standing against false preachers here, why aren't they to **fear**?
7. What are the **ten** days of tribulations?
8. What was the **temporal** vs. the eternal?
9. What is the crown of **life**?
10. What is the **first** resurrection? The second resurrection?